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ABSTRACT

Children respond happily and spontaneously to poetry, their natural language and the simplest form of literature. This paper presents reasons for using poetry with children, discusses the nature of children's poetry and the people who write it, explores the times and the ways in which teachers should use poetry with children in the classroom, suggests poetry that may be used with visually oriented children, and proposes ways for stimulating children to write poetry. Examples of poetry which children enjoy listening to, as well as poetry they can write, illustrate the text. (JM)

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I Feel a Poem Coming On--

Communicating With Children Through Poetry

Children and Poetry - August 18, 1976

Poetry is communication. It is a speaking and listening experience. And poetry for children communicates with them in their natural language. But poems should be heard and not seen by young children. They react to the tempo, cadence, and imagery of verses read aloud. If children do not respond emotionally and communicate their delight, then what they have heard isn't poetry.

Although poetry is not bound by the ribbons of rhyme, young children are tuned in and turned on by rhyme. They delight in Mother Goose, from Old Mother Hubbard confronted by the bare cupboard to derelict Boy Blue who neglected to blow his horn and save the corn from being shorn.

Children jump rope to rhymes. Fuzzy Wuzzy Bear still has no "hair" as sung by the jump rope set today, for to modernize him with a "rug," a transplant, or a weaving job would spoil the jingle.

And the wiggles and the giggles that abound when children inadvertantly say something that rhymes-or better still, hear you speak in unexpected rhyme-make the poet reach for pencil and paper.

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But pleased though we may be by rhyme, one must avoid the pitfalls of forced rhyme. Forced rhyme is a crime. When rhyming becomes doggerel, it ceases to be poetry. There is a world of difference between doggerel and nonsense verse such as "higgledy-piggledy," and the ear knows the difference.

Not all children's poetry need rhyme to delight the ear. Children's own prose is as charming as their natural sense or love of rhymes. They often say spontaneously what a poet might work on for days or weeks. What more delightful description of a tree's being pruned than the four-year-old's exclamation: "Daddy--look. The tree is getting a haircut!" The boy was communicating a discovery through natural poetic expression. He was seeing not only the act but also the significance of that act.

That is why we should all feel a poem coming on, all of us who are about the business of communicating with children. For communicating <u>is</u> our business. Without it, there is no teaching, no sharing, no learning, no exchange of ideas and emotions. And poetry trains the child's ears to the cadence of words. It develops his sensitivity to the power and the music of language. It turns the child <u>on</u> to reading.

As one time-honored poet begins, "Listen, my children, and you shall hear..." We hear children when they speak, but do we <u>listen</u>? Do we <u>really</u> listen to them communicating their thoughts and ideas in their own beautiful way? Do we return the communication by giving them the rhythm, the singing words, the strong sensory imagery of poetry? We should!

Many teachers are hesitant to use poetry with their youngsters because they are not poets themselves and are unsure how to use it. We are not all "poets and don't know it." What is natural speech for youngsters is not necessarily natural for adults. But one does not

have to be a poet to appreciate poetry or to use it. Do you have to be an architect to live in a house or an automotive designer to drive a car?

Poetry has got it all together for children. Poetry and children make a perfect pair--almost as good as peanut butter and jelly.

Why use poetry with children?

What is poetry for children?

When and How should we use poetry with children?

Who writes children's poems?

Where do we find good poems for today's visually oriented generation?

Writing (Yes, Writing) poetry with children.

As we explore together these Five W's Plus One you will find yourselves serving poetry with pleasure, infected with a higher P.Q. (Poetry Quotient), and exhilarated by the feeling of a poem coming on--strong!

Why Use Poetry With Children?

> If you were as small
> As a little black ant,
> What would you do
> That big people can't? (6)

With all the innovative ideas that the modern curriculum offers and demands, why should we take the time to use poetry with children? Because poetry is the natural language of children. Poetry is imagery. And the imagery is what distinguishes poetry from mere verse. Verse is based on observation, poetry on imagination. Without imagination a poem never takes wing. It remains a caterpillar on the leaf of reality.

What is imagination? As one earnest child put it when told to use her imagination: "But where is it, teacher? I can't find it anywhere. Maybe I left it on the school bus..."

What is the difference between using observation and imagination? Compare the following rhymes about clouds and jet planes:

Clouds

The clouds are white,
The sky is blue,
The yellow sun
Is shining through

Sky Circus

Clouds are clowns
Up in the sky,
Rolling and tumbling
As they pass by. (9)

Jets

The jet plane leaves
a vapor trail
across the blue sky.

Sky Notes

Jets are pencils
scribbling messages
on a tablet of blue.

--Pauline C. Peck

What does each make you see in your mind's eye? Which in each set uses observation; which uses imagination? Which do you think are verse and which poetry?

When Alfred Noyes writes "The moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas" he uses vivid sensory imagery. Sensory imagery takes everyday happenings out of the commonplace through the frame of words. And children respond to poetic imagery with enjoyment. When children hear rhymes read aloud, they soon discover that they can hop, skip, gallop, run, clap, walk, jog, or rock to verse as easily as they can to music. The imagery gives the impetus. The child's mind does the rest.

A poem is to feel. Poetry is emotion rather than sheer intellect. We use poetry with children to share emotions evoked by:

laughter--

A Rhino Isn't Cuddly

Now a rhino isn't cuddly,
For it won't fit on your lap.
And I wouldn't want to pet one
Even when it takes a nap!
And a rhino isn't friendly
For I've never seen one smile.

But I'd rather pet a rhino
Than a smiling crocodile! (4)

psuedo fear--

Tigers

Tigers are striped prowlers
Stalking through the trees.
Looking, peering, sniffing,
Every little breeze.
Hoping for the odor
of some delicious meat.

I'm glad I'm not the dinner
The tiger hopes to eat! (12)

joy--

One Little Puppy

One little puppy
Can run down the street,
One little puppy
On four little feet.

One little puppy
Is always a joy,
One little puppy
For one little boy. (8)

psuedo sadness--

Presence of Mind

When, with my little daughter, Blanche,
I climbed the Alps last summer,
    I saw a dreadful avalanche
        About to overcome her;
And, as it swept her down the slope,
    I vaguely wondered whether
I should be wise to cut the rope
    That held us twain together.

I must confess I'm glad I did,
But still I miss the child--poor kid! (2)

love--

The Love of a Dog

Puppy love is warm and sweet
Because it's fresh and new,
But it can't compare
To the love of the dog
Who has grown old with you.
--Pauline C. Peck

anger--

Timothy's Bad Day

I feel like thunder inside
So I'll bang and crash and roar
And help the rain to pour.
I'll make such a terrible noise
That everybody will say:
"We'd better get out of the way
'Cause Timothy's angry today." (1)

triumph--

Mr. J. O. L.

They chose him from a golden pile,
"The best one here," they said.
And then they carved a funny face
And hollowed out his head.

They put a candle deep inside
Behind his golden chin,
And when they lit the wick they saw
The jack-o'-lantern grin!

--Pauline C. Peck

Poetry is personal. We do not all enjoy the same poems. And children will respond differently to various poems. They will show you whether or not they like a particular poem. Watch for smiles, chuckles, laughter, awe. And when youngsters really like a poem, you will often find a pregnant pause after you have read it, and then a spontaneous burst of applause. But the most significant sign will be their request to hear it again. Then you will know you are really communicating with your youngsters through poetry.

Poetry is the wind nibbling at your nose, the lure of the silver threads of a spider web, wiggly worms taking a bath in a puddle of rain, dandelions shampooing their hair. Poetry does not usually attempt to explain; it simply is.

Poetry is the simplest form of literature. Some educators feel that poetry should be the foundation of all literature teaching. The child's language is poetic; therefore, the language of the poet stirs the child's responses and opens doors to the wonderland of literature.

Kornei Chukovsky deals with the language, the thought processes, and the imagination of the very young. He views the child as an explorer of language with a predilection for verse. His delightful book From Two to Five offers many examples of verse for and by children. Most of them are rhymed, for the young child is virtually addicted to rhyme.

Poetry can do many things for youngsters. It can offer pleasure, familiar language, memories, the comfort of a security blanket, amusement, joy, a sense of relaxation and adventure. Children memorize lines from poems - or even whole poems - almost unconsciously. Do you want a child to remember a precious thought or an important fact? Set it to rhyme, and it will be remembered!

When you are suddenly asked how many days there are in a particular month do you find yourself reciting "Thirty days hath September, April, June and November?"

Poetry can lift young spirits. It gives children something to grow on. It helps them to discover and appreciate the many uses of their senses. Poetry challenges children's imagination and stirs them to communicate in interesting ways. For example:

Hungry Wind

The hungry wind in winter
Whistles through the doors.
It sneaks in every tiny crack
And crawls along the floors.
It hides behind the curtains,
Then what do you suppose?
When I'm asleep, it pounces
And nibbles at my nose! (10)

Poetry develops oral fluency. In reading aloud, a speaker gains confidence in his mode of expression, feels the printed word, and interprets it. The listener gains in interpretive skills.

Reading is a multidisciplinary enterprise, and poetry should share in the program. Through using poetry you can unglue kids from their

seats, set them in motion, create a vivid mental image, and - above all - help them to communicate. Children can learn language through poetry and learn how to communicate their thoughts through language, so put a poem in your plan book as often as possible! A pinch of poetry can add a dash of spice to your teaching.

What Is Poetry for Children?

It's night, late at night. Shadows creep from the corners of the room where you sit. The bird in the covered cage is silent. You feel alone in the dark of the room. The shadows deepen. Unconsciously you listen. The clock in the hall ticks, rhythmically, echoingly. You hear footsteps, footsteps resounding in the silence, coming closer. You hold your breath to hear them. Tap, tap; tap, tap; tap, tap; tap, tap. A light step, a heavy step, a light step, a heavy step - a pattern, a rhythm. And then you let your breath out in a whoosh of relief. It's Happy, your beloved dog, making his own pattern of sounds slowly down the hall. You are not alone after all.

This regular recurrence of accented sounds is rhythm. And that's what poetry is all about. Without rhythm, a singing flow of words, there is no poetry.

Like good conversation, poetry should talk to children. It should communicate; inspire; provoke; inform; tell of things that are, things that were, things that never will be, things that someday might be. Poetry should express feelings. It should communicate emotions. Children should feel a poem and they should react to their feelings.

Words in poems for children can be as old and comfortable as their favorite pair of shoes or as fresh and new as the first spring crocus.

Poetry for children should broaden their horizons. It should stir their thinking processes:

A Crocodile Has Quite a Smile

A crocodile has quite a smile,
A panther has its crouch.
A camel has its long, dry mile,
A kangaroo its pouch.
A rhino has a tough old hide,
An eagle has its nest.
But a kitten has a purr inside,
That's why I like it best!

--Pauline C. Peck

Poetry for children should introduce them to new ideas:

The Walking Umbrella

I have an umbrella
That opens so high,
I think my umbrella
Is bigger than I.

Whenever it's raining
I walk down the street
And all people see are
My two little feet.

I have to peek over
Or under the brim,
To see where I'm going
And where I have been!

So if you are out in
The rain you will see,
A walking umbrella
And under it...me! (11)

Poetry for children should explore their self-concept:

Myself

Sometimes I feel angry
And sometimes I feel sad.
Sometimes I feel frightened,
And sometimes I feel glad.
But all the time I'm feeling,
I hope you will agree -
I have one feeling that won't change.
I'm happy to be me! (7)

Poetry should help children to probe what poets have to say; it should prepare them for reading other materials; it should be a gate to the world of literature.

When children hear poems their minds, memories, and imaginations should be stretched and expanded. Poetry should have no ceiling. It should help children's thoughts grow into giant concepts.

Poetry should develop communication skills by helping children learn to listen, look, feel, value, judge. It should delight as well as nourish the mind. It should present thought pictures: "Winter may be silver, But Autumn days are gold."

Frequent rhyming is important in poetry for the very young. In the poem Ice Is Nice the carrier (important) words rhyme.

Ice Is Nice

A puppy dog likes a bone to chew,
While a robin likes a worm or two.
A tiger cat likes to hunt for mice,
But a polar bear thinks
That ice is nice! (5)

Although not all poems need to rhyme, young children are more attracted to those that do. And nonrhymed poems should paint vivid thought pictures as does Carl Sandburg's Fog. Children can picture the fog coming "on little cat feet."

Poems for children should have movement, change of pace, and melodic syllabication. The words and phrases should not be verbal brickbats. They should roll off the tongue. Children should feel the urge to sway, swing, clap, and move to lines such as "We've got freckles on our noses, and there's sand between our toeses."

Poetry for children should begin in wonder and end in delight. Children experiment with concepts. They wonder about things: "Where do the ducks go at night?" And the delight of a truly surprise ending really stirs youngsters. They love "I'm glad I'm not the dinner the tiger hopes to eat!"

What are poems for children? A good rule of thumb is this: If you like a poem, the children will like it too. If you don't like it, don't use it. And if you don't trust your PQ (Poetry Quotient), then use your TQ (Teacher Quotient). Anyone who has the love, patience, and desire to spend his days teaching young children has an instinct for what will turn them on!

When and How To Use Poetry With Children

Using poetry with children should be a natural happening. It should be as spontaneous as a sneeze. It should be a turn-on, not a turn-off. It should fulfill a need in this computerized world of "progress." Poetry brings soothing rhythm to speech, multifaceted meaning to words, food for the soul, and a key to open the door to creativity and imagination.

Poetry feeds upon the natural language of children, so use it to build and enrich their vocabularies and concepts. Don't shackle poetry to an art/literature lesson once a week. Don't schedule it for a unit in which your youngsters will "learn all there is to know" about poetry and then breathe a sigh of relief when you feel you have paid your debt to this form of literary art.

Let a poem creep into a lesson like a wandering visitor. Seize the moment. Explore it. Enjoy it. Learn all you can about it with your pupils. Then let it wander on. You might just find it returning at some unexpected moment - and it might return bearing gifts!

Use Poems as Vocabulary Stretchers. Through poetry, help children to learn new words and phrases: Explore them, play with them; roll them off the tongue; master them. Use the new words and phrases to communicate. They should form a bank in children's minds from which they are encouraged to make frequent loans.

Use Nursery Rhymes. They are a child's first pair of literary shoes. Although most nursery rhymes were not written expressly for children but had their roots in the satirical or political treatises of their day, don't ignore them. Let children adopt them for their own! Don't let today's generation of youngsters miss out on the language fun of a cow jumping over the moon, even though astronauts have walked on it!

Use Favorite Songs. Believe it or not, most songs started out as poems. Are your youngsters turned off by the latest hit records? Would they groan and moan if you suddenly decided to play records for an hour? Capitalize on their interest in music. Try reading pop-rock lyrics or folk ballads aloud. Some of them are quite beautiful.

Use Poetry as a Language Arts Stimulator. Set the stage by having budding "sheriffs" enliven the room with exciting seasonal posters or otherwise timely handbills. They might read, "Wanted -- A Circus Poem," or "Dangerous -- A Poem About Sharks," or "Be on the lookout for -- A poem by John Ciardi."

Let Children Pantomime Poetry. Many poems lend themselves to pantomime. Even the shyest child can usually be drawn into pantomime, and from there will bounce right into choral speaking with vivid expression. The first volunteer "Marcel Marceau" will encourage others to participate.

Try "Discover a Poem" Week. Print a poem each day on experience charts, chalkboard, or other media. Children discover the poem that appeals to them and illustrate it. Display the illustrations as the poems are read aloud. Be sure children are aware of the poet who created the poem. Very few poems are anonymous. You'd be amazed at the number of poems children quite innocently submit as their own to children's magazines because they have never learned the true author's name. Some of mine have even won awards for children!

Have a Special Poetry Happening. Let children take turns sharing their favorite poems on any subject or by any author. Welcome all poems from nursery rhymes to children's own original creations.

Display Provocative Pictures. Inspire children to write poems. Have pencils and paper handy to help record their inspirations. For the too-young-to-write but not too-young-to-create, you may have to be the recorder. Or let children from upper grades record the poems. They'll be flattered you asked!

Try Writing Parodies. Some Mother Goose rhymes are fun subjects for parodies. For instance,

"Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the Cupboard
To get herself some dinner,
But all she found was diet Tab,
And now she's ten pounds thinner!"

Above all, don't kill poetry with memorizing, analyzing, and dissecting. Enjoy it. Let poems dart in and out of your children's lives like bright sunbeams. A poem has one strike against it to begin with -- it's a four-letter word!

Integrate Poetry With All the Disciplines. Don't discriminate against poetry by limiting it to language arts or reading. "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" can be as helpful in teaching numerical recognition in kindergarten as Alfred Noyes's The Highwayman can be to upper graders in forming values.

Make Poetry -- Good Poetry -- An Integral Part of Your Teaching. Use it as often as it helps you to communicate with your youngsters -- once a day, once a week -- whenever it blends in with your teaching. Because teaching is communicating, and poetry communicates!

Who Writes Children's Poems?

The happy, singing tradition of poetry for children was given a rousing beginning by the Mother Goose rhymes. Who wrote these? Although a Dame Goose and a flock of little gosling names can be found on tombstones in Boston's Old Granary Burying Ground, the verses came chiefly from England and the name Mother Goose from France. Following Mother Goose, Edward Lear was the next poet to stir laughter in children. Lear's limericks are still enjoyed, passed on, and imitated. His coined words, exact meter, and musical rhymes that evoke giggles and laughter keep his limericks from being retired even though some involve unfamiliar names, places and ideas.

Lewis Carroll, Laura E. Richards, and Leslie Brooke have contributed many delightful and humorous poems for children. Laura Richards' "Eletelephony" is a classic example of juggling letters and words.

A.A. Milne's poems involve people in amusingly possible situations. Milne reflects children's thoughts and language in delightful ways.

So many other well-known poets have contributed valuable and enduring poems for children. Most of us have met them somewhere along our growing-up path through one or more of their charming poems: Walter de la Mare, William Shakespeare, Christina Rossetti, Sarah Teasdale, Elizabeth Coatsworth, Rose Fyleman, Vachel Lindsay, Stephen Vincent and Rosemary Carr Benét, James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene Field, Kate Greenaway, Robert Louis Stevenson, Eleanor Farjeon, Robert Frost, Rachel Field, Dorothy Aldis, and many, many more.

Although Aldis does not usually offer outstanding form, her appeal is in her knowledge of children's interests. Her Thanksgiving verse has delighted many youngsters over the years.

The little girl said,
As she asked for more,
"But what is the turkey
Thankful for?"

Gwendolyn Brooks, a black poet, has universal appeal because her poems speak to children of any ethnic background. BRONZEVILLE BOYS AND GIRLS contains poems that show a rare insight into a child's inner thoughts.

Aileen Fisher affords a light, gay touch and often a mystery in her many poems for youngsters. She has been a prolific writer since the 1930's. Her GOING BAREFOOT is a book to delight children of all ages.

Myra Cohn Livingston's poems in books such as WHISPERS, and her most recent 4-WAY STOP treat the imaginings of young children in sensory ways.

David McCord's poems often appeal to the youngest child as well as to the most sophisticated adult. THE STAR IN THE PAIL is the most recently published book of his poetry.

John Ciardi takes a very original approach to poetry for youngsters. He offers impossible incidents and seriocomic consequences in a delightful style. With Ciardi and McCord around there is no danger that nonsense verse and humorous poems for children will disappear.

Vivian Gouled is a contemporary poet whose rhymes delight children as well as communicate with them. Leland Jacobs, Jean Conder Soule, Ilo Orleans, Ruth McFadden Svec, and Lois Lenski are among the poets today who write almost exclusively for children.

When we communicate with children, we are affecting the future. We are helping youngsters to enjoy life through words, to see the world as it is and as it can be, and to form values that are particularly important in this era of dynamic growth and change. And when we communicate through poetry, we communicate in the child's

way. We pass on the seeds of thought that may someday blossom into a new fruit of the future.

There are many good poets today who write for children. I have just helped you to sip one drop from the well. But there are many wells to draw from.

Where Do We Find Good Poetry for Children?

Take a trip to the library - any library - the smallest, in your school; or the largest, in a nearby city. You will find illustrated poetry books and anthologies galore. "Let your fingers do the walking" through the yellow pages of the phone book. The yellow pages list bookstores that carry all kinds of poetry books for children.

Read the Literary Arts section of your newspapers carefully, especially around Book Week time and you'll find reviews of children's poetry books. Some of the titles may tempt you to draw from the literary well -- WHAT A WONDERFUL BIRD THE FROG ARE; SUNG UNDER THE SILVER UMBRELLA; THE BIRDS AND THE BEASTS WERE THERE; POEMS ABOUT FUR AND FEATHER FRIENDS; THE FLASHLIGHT; AT THE TOP OF MY VOICE.

Check your basal readers, workbooks, and their teacher's editions. Many of them carry poems. Scott Foresman, Ginn and Company, The Economy Company are just a few that incorporate good poetry for children in their materials.

Poetry and rhymes are frequently used in materials for pre-schoolers. Weslee D'Audney's recent CALENDAR OF DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS incorporates a number of contemporary rhymes to be used in creative learning situations.

Other good sources of poetry for youngsters are teachers' magazines such as EARLY YEARS; TEACHER; INSTRUCTOR. And many children's magazines usually carry poems -- some even written by youngsters themselves! Although they may not win a Pulitzer Prize, they are

important because they are an example of kids communicating with kids. JACK AND JILL; HUMPTY DUMPTY; HIGHLIGHTS; CRICKET; EBONY JR. all carry poems for and by children. MY WEEKLY READER, the children's newspaper used in many schools in the U.S., carries poems in the children's editions as well as in the teacher's editions.

So try a pinch of poetry in your teaching. You may soon find your children will have a "peck of poetry" to draw upon from the magic storehouse of their minds.

And after you have shared good poems with your students, try writing poetry with them!

Writing (Yes, Writing) Poetry With Children

If your children are willing to try writing poetry, you have passed the test! You have interested them. You have shared the joys of poetry. And do let your youngsters express themselves in whatever way they wish -- including rhymed and unrhymed prose that has a poetic flow. You'll find yourself learning a great deal about your children. You'll learn that they frequently think in pairs, often opposites: "Rain is a pain, but sun is fun!" The mother who said to her child, "Wear your scarf, Sandy. It's raw out." used a perfectly common adult phrase. When Sandy responded, "When will it be cooked?" she was thinking in logical opposites.

In writing poetry with children you will find yourself receiving a ton of ore. But from each ton a child digs from the depths of his or her thoughts, you can pan a few flakes of precious gold. As children express their thoughts in their verses, they will learn something about themselves. And so will you!

Try Giving Children Starter-Uppers

Toss out two lines that need a rhyming word for completion. Sometimes children can complete a thought even before you finish expressing it.

Up in the tree
Sat a buzzy, fuzzy_____.

I thought I saw a pussy cat
Sleeping on a yellow_____.

Little fishes in the brook,
Won't you nibble at my_____?

Flitter, flutter butterfly
Soaring in the morning_____.

You'll find that children will supply more words than the seemingly obvious rhyming one the starter-upper calls for. They may supply an unrhyming, nonsense, or coined word. Accept all responses. The words don't have to rhyme or make sense. What is important is that the children listened and responded. And don't force all children to take part. Some may prefer to do their own thing -- from scratch.

Try Haiku

Haiku originated in Japan. It consists of three lines and usually deals with nature and/or the seasons. The first line has five syllables, the second has seven, and the third has five. Share several examples of haiku with the class, then invite students to try writing it. Don't demand that they conform to the syllabication pattern if they have created a thought of their own. One child wrote a beautiful three-line thought and the teacher who read it discarded it because the second line had only six syllables. That teacher threw out the baby with the bath water.

Help children to use meaningful words and vivid expressions as they try writing haiku. The words they choose will suggest how they feel about something.

Winter

Snowflakes from the sky
Drifting slowly to the ground,
A blanket of white.
--Pauline C. Peck

A Rainbow

A morning rainbow
Near the sun and winter clouds
Surprises the day.
--Virginia H. Niles (3)

Try Tanka

Tanka are related to haiku. They run slightly longer and are usually associated with the seasons. The five lines of tanka follow a pattern of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables. But they can be five short lines without any specific number of syllables. Tanka are more of a challenge to older children.

Try Cinquains

The original cinquain created by Adelaide Crapsey consists of five lines. The five lines have a syllabication pattern of 2-4-6-8-2. However, most people who use cinquains with children follow a slightly different pattern. Line 1 - one-word title; Line 2 - two verbs about the title; Line 3 - three words expressing feeling or action; Line 4 - two words describing the title word; Line 5 - repeat the title word, or use a synonym. A cinquain can be about any subject.

Roller coaster
Climbs, dips,
Zips, zaps, zips,
Fast, scary
Fun ride.

There are many kinds of poetry to try writing with your youngsters -- from rhymed to unrhymed. Whichever form you choose, keep in mind that poetry should speak naturally and simply about things.

Spread poetry on the bread of all your teaching. You'll find your youngsters relishing their learning diet. And as you plan each day's teaching menu, you may feel a poem coming on, strong! Above all, you will be communicating with your youngsters in an exciting way.

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